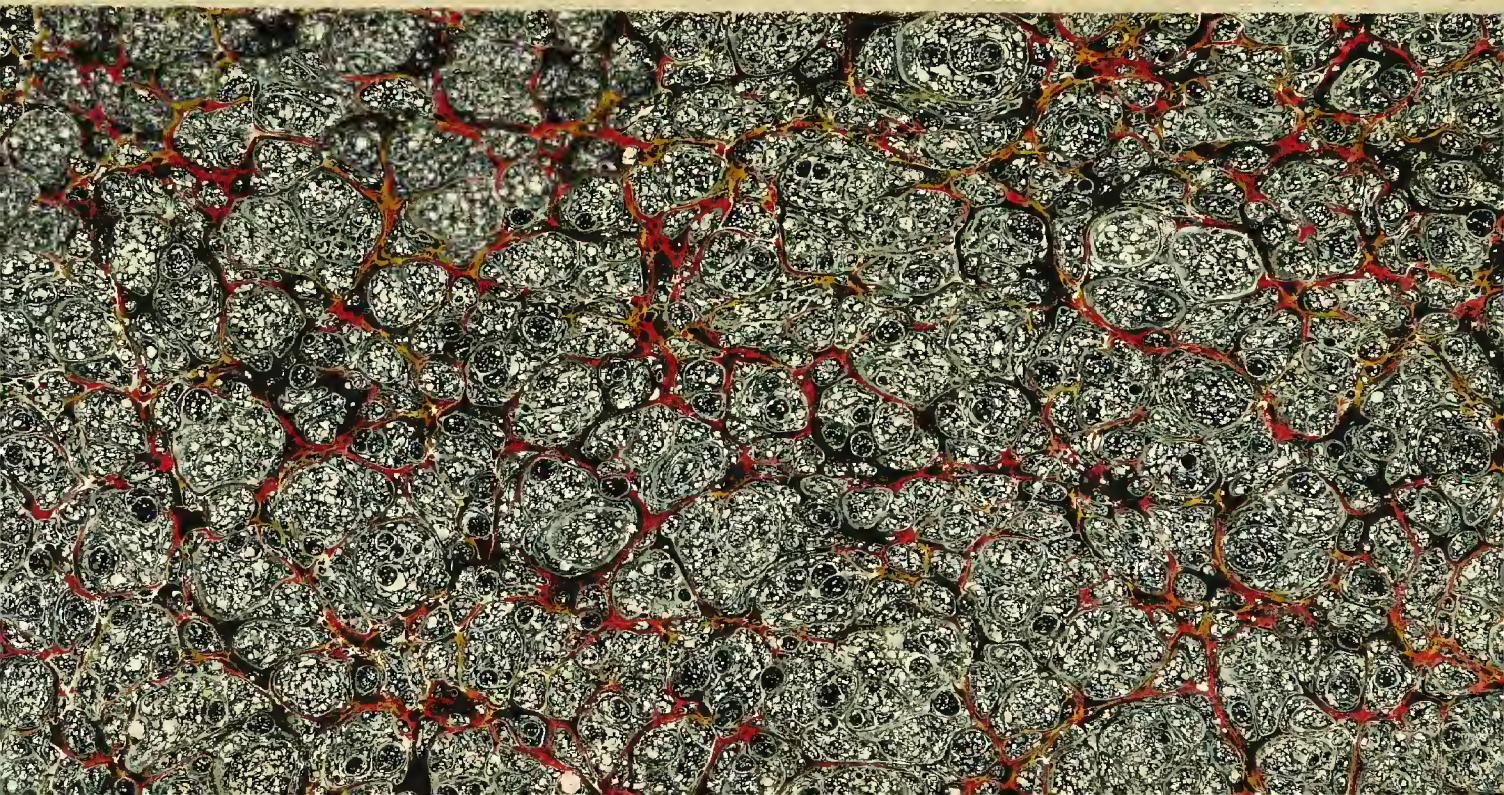

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MR. MCKEEN'S
Election Sermon.
DELIVERED MAY 28, 1800.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HONORABLE THE COUNCIL,

AND THE

HONORABLE THE SENATE,

AND

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts,

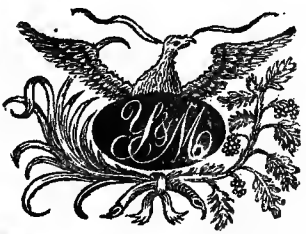
MAY 28, 1800,

BEING THE DAY OF

General Election.

By JOSEPH MCKEEN, *A. M.*

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN BEVERLY.



BOSTON :—PRINTED BY YOUNG & MINNS, STATE PRINTERS.

1800.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES, *May* 28, 1800.

ORDERED—That MOSES BROWN and JAMES BURNHAM, Esquires, and Mr. JOHN STEPHENS, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. McKEEN, of *Beverly*, and in the name of the House, to thank him for his Discourse this day delivered before the Hon. Council and the two Branches of the Legislature, and to request a copy thereof for the Press.

Extract from the Journals,

ATTEST—HENRY WARREN, *Clerk.*

AN

Election Sermon.

MATTHEW 5—xiv—Latter part of the Verſe.

A CITY THAT IS SET ON AN HILL, CANNOT BE HID.

THE divine author of our holy religion addreſſing his immediate diſciples, ſuggeſted to them the diſtinguiſhed part they ſhould be called to act in erecting his kingdom of righteouſneſs and truth in the world.

HE well knew that many would eſtimate the character and worth of his religion by its viſible influence on *their* conduct. If they imbibed its genuine ſpirit, and exhibited in their deportment a juſt ſpecimen of its purity, they would recommend it to the conſciences of men. But ſhould they, on the contrary, practically diſregard its doctrines and precepts, they would incur the ſuſpicion of propagating a cunningly deviſed fable for ſelfiſh purpoſes, unfriendly to the general intereſt and happineſs of mankind.

THAT they might act their part with dignity and fidelity, with honor to themſelves, and advantage to their fellow men, it was neceſſary that their minds

ſhould

should be impressed with a deep sense of the importance of the work assigned them, and of their high responsibility. Their every word and action would acquire new importance from their office, and would invite the critical attention of friends and foes. The former would be likely to defend and imitate even their foibles, and the latter to exaggerate them into crimes of magnitude to the disadvantage of them and their cause. It behoved them therefore to remember that all eyes were upon them, and that, to guard their own reputation, and promote the best interest of mankind, their whole conduct should be governed by wisdom and integrity. A City that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

THE same observations are in a degree applicable to all men, who fill important offices in the Commonwealth.

MANY will always form their opinion of a government from what they know of the characters of the men who administer it. They are better judges of the private characters of men, with whom they are conversant, than they are of the constitutionality, propriety, or tendency of their political measures. When a government is administered by men of acknowledged wisdom and rectitude, it will have the confidence, attachment and support of good men. When it is administered by men, whose characters are vile or contemptible, it will be abhorred or despised.

THAT rulers therefore may in the best manner answer the end of their elevation, it is desirable that their private as well their official conduct should command

command the respect of every beholder. To do this, brilliancy of talents is by no means the most essential requisite. It is far from being necessary, for instance, that every member of a deliberative assembly should be qualified to shine as a public speaker. A sound judgment, and a general knowledge of the public interest, are necessary to the discharge of the duties of their places with reputation to themselves, and advantage to the community; but these endowments and qualifications for usefulness will not ensure them the respect and confidence of an enlightened and free people, unless they are reputed men of virtue. The greater their abilities and knowledge are, if they are believed to be destitute of moral principle, the more they will be objects of fear and distrust. The servile and corrupt will seek their favor, and expect to gain it by their readiness to co-operate in the execution of base designs; but good men, alarmed and discouraged, will retire into the shade, accounting in such a state of things a private station the most honorable post. It is obviously, then, of great importance that men in places of public trust, authority and honor, should be not only truly virtuous, but unsuspected. It is conceived to be more necessary in a free, than in a despotic government. In the latter, force is the instrument that is principally relied on to preserve the public tranquility; but in the former, much is to be done by instruction, persuasion and example. The influence of these will be felt by the well-disposed, who will be gently drawn into a combination in favor of the order and happiness of society, which

which will extend its benign influence over others less informed and less virtuous. In a design so laudable and patriotic, it may be reasonably expected that virtuous rulers will lead the way. The happiness of society is an object, which they will always keep in view. And it is believed that in many cases their example will contribute not less efficaciously than their statutes to the real respectability and permanent prosperity of the State.

It has pleased God in his gracious providence to grant us the singular privilege of deliberately framing, and freely adopting, constitutions of government, for the express purpose of securing our freedom, and promoting our welfare. Their importance and excellence are, and ought to be, gratefully acknowledged. But, if the real freedom of a country depends as much on the character and habits of the people as on a written constitution, our civil fathers will give us leave to solicit the weight of their example, authority and influence in opposition to the mistaken notions and vices which threaten our liberty, and in favor of the principles and virtues, which are indispensable to our freedom and happiness.

It is not thought necessary to attempt on this occasion a formal proof of the power of example. It has been seen and felt and acknowledged in every age. It is equally obvious that the example of men in places of authority and honor is more influential, and more likely to be imitated than that of persons in the lower walks of life, especially in an elective free republic, where there are no hereditary distinctions

tions of rank to prevent a free intercourse between the people and their rulers. Their elevation renders them conspicuous, like a city on a hill, and naturally attracts the public attention. Besides there is a general disposition in people to imitate the conduct of their superiors: And, unfortunately, they learn more easily to imitate their vices than their virtues. For this reason men, who are cloathed with power, or raised by their wealth above their neighbors, ought to feel themselves in a degree responsible for the behaviour of those around them. The happy tendency of good example deserves to be seriously considered by every virtuous ruler, and every real friend of his country. Blessed be GOD, we have had a WASHINGTON, whose unrivalled fame may silence the suggestions of a false shame, and dissipate the fears of timid virtue, which dreads the charge of singularity in goodness.

GOOD example acts with the greater effect, because it reproves without upbraiding, and teaches us to correct our faults without giving us the mortification of knowing that any but ourselves, have ever observed them. We feel the force of counsel or persuasion much more sensibly, when we see that one does what he advises or requires us to do. But the best counsel from one, who obeys not his own precepts, nor practices upon the principles of his own advice, will generally be little regarded. We do not believe a man to be in earnest, who advises one thing, and does the contrary.

To resist the progress of irreligion, injustice, luxury, selfishness, and an impatience of legal restraint,

is a duty imposed by patriotism. And I hope my much respected hearers feel their obligation to recommend by their own example piety, justice, economy, public spirit, an attachment to our constitutions, and a cheerful submission to the laws, as essential to our political happiness. The influence of their example is the more necessary at the present day, because an attachment to old opinions and old customs, which once exercised an almost boundless sway over the human mind, has lost great part of its power, and has given place to a passion for innovation, which rejects whatever is old fashioned with as little reason and as little examination as prejudice formerly retained it. This passion indulged would prostrate the religious, moral and political principles, which are the bulwarks of our freedom.

It has been thought by many, and still is by some, that government is the only foe to liberty; that the people of any or every country might at once become free and happy, if such a spirit of opposition to their oppressors could be excited as would enable them to cast off their old chains. But experience is correcting this error.

When we cast off the British yoke, we generally apprehended the greatest danger to our liberties from the power which must be delegated to our rulers. Accordingly, our principal guards were placed on that side. Power was granted with great caution. Barriers were erected against its abuse. Its duration was made short. Its exercise has been watched with the eyes of jealousy, and the right of censure exercised with great freedom. But is there not

equal

equal or greater danger on the other side? The constitution of this Commonwealth has not indeed left us unguarded against our vices; but the importance of these guards has not in general been duly appreciated. We have been less afraid of our vices than of our rulers.

THE love of liberty we inherit from our fathers; it is so "interwoven with the ligaments of our hearts," that there can be little doubt of our enjoying it, and little danger of its being wrested from us so long as we are capable and worthy of it. But a capacity for enjoying it depends on a sound and healthful state of the body politic.

THE more freedom we have, the more necessary is the aid of religious and moral principles to the maintenance of order and tranquility. When these are lost, or very much relaxed, severe restraints, which cannot always admit of those legal forms, that are essential to the security of liberty, become necessary; yet the people may retain a love of liberty, or rather an impatience of restraint, as the sensualist retains a passion for pleasure, after his constitution is so much impaired by excess, that indulgence would be fatal to him. Liberty, like the pleasures of sense, must be enjoyed with temperance and moderation, lest degenerating into licentiousness it prove destructive. There are none, it may be presumed, who will openly avow that political liberty is, or ought to be, a license for every one to do what is right in his own eyes; yet where the love of liberty is strong, and its nature not distinctly understood, there is too often a disposition to look with an indulgent

dulgent eye on licentiousness, as only the extreme of a good thing, and therefore pardonable. But the difference between them is greater than some imagine: They are indeed so different, as to be incompatible in society. When one has an excess of liberty, he invades the rights of his neighbor, who is thereby deprived of a portion of the liberty which a free constitution promises him. Liberty in that case becomes exclusively the possession of the strong, the unprincipled, the artful, who makes a prey of the innocent, weak and unsuspicious. A state of things like this is a real despotism, and of the worst kind. It is a poor consolation to the plundered, abused sufferer to be told, that he must not complain; for his oppressor is not an hereditary monarch, acting by a pretended divine right, but only a fellow citizen, acting in the name of "liberty and equality."

He might answer, "If I must be deprived of my liberty or property at the will of another, let me have an hereditary master, who, secure in the possession of his power, will oppress according to certain rules, which long usage has sanctioned, and long experience has proved to be not incompatible with the existence of the community. But deliver me from the tyrant of a day, who knows no bounds to his rapacity: Deliver me from anarchy, which rages like a fire that cannot be quenched. Established despotism, dreadful as it is, is systematical, its operations are in some measure subjects of calculation; but anarchy, like the hurricane, spreads horror and devastation, and seems to rejoice in its triumph over every

every thing that wears the semblance of order or utility."

To some, who do not distinguish between social and personal freedom, it may still seem a paradox that restraint should be necessary to the being of liberty. In their view a free government and a weak government mean the same thing. But scarce any mathematical truth admits of a more conclusive demonstration than this, that laws wisely framed, impartially interpreted, and faithfully executed, are essential to the liberty of a community. Liberty cannot be long enjoyed under a government that has not sufficient energy to be a terror to evil doers. The law is not made for the righteous, it is not made to restrain the honest, peaceable, sober and industrious members of society, who are a law to themselves; but it is made for the lawless and disobedient, murderers, men-stealers, liars, purjured persons, and others, who can be restrained only by the strong arm of power. That love of liberty, therefore, which prompts men to resist the laws, and to overturn or weaken the government established for the common good, is a spurious passion, which every well informed friend to real liberty will feel himself in duty bound to discountenance. It is not less necessary that we should understand and practise our duties, than that we should understand and assert our rights. The prevalence of sound virtue therefore would afford the best security to our liberty. It is admitted, I believe, by all political writers, that morality is absolutely necessary to the happiness of a free State. And there is if I mistake not a growing

ing conviction in reflecting minds that religion is the only sure support of morality. It is with peculiar pleasure, that we read in the valedictory address of the late illustrious President of the United States, the following sentiments, which can never be too deeply impressed on our minds. "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who would labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it be simply asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice. And let us with *caution* indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded of the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

The constitution of this Commonwealth recognizes the same important principle, and expressly declares that the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality. It requires that any person chosen Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Counsellor, Senator, or Representative,

Representative, and accepting the trust, shall make a declaration that he believes the christian religion, and has a firm persuasion of its truth. Charity therefore forbids us to believe, without strong evidence of the fact, that any of them will ever endeavour to destroy the foundation of our happiness and best hopes, and thus incur the reproach which justly belongs to the hypocrite. And the same charity teaches us to indulge the pleasing expectation that our honored civil fathers will lend the influence of their example to support the institutions of Christianity, and to attract a general attention to "public instructions in piety, religion, and morality." The excellence of Christianity, and the good effects of which it may be productive to society, must be acknowledged by all who seriously and impartially consider the purity of its precepts, the tendency of its doctrines, and the power of its motives. Yet no person, who is acquainted with the true genius of the gospel, will be likely to suspect that it is merely a political institution, or that its highest object is the preservation of civil order. Its great aim is to assimilate us to the moral image of our Maker, and to make us happy in eternity. But such is the constitution of things under the government of our benevolent Creator, that the same temper and conduct which lead to happiness in another world, have a tendency to make us happy in this. The spirit of genuine Christianity universally, or even generally, imbibed, would meliorate the condition of mankind in a higher degree, than can ever be expected from the wisest and best institutions

stitutions of a merely civil nature. Its chief energy is levelled at the heart; its first aim is to purify the fountain of human actions, that the stream may be pure also. By its influence on private character it makes good rulers and good citizens, and disposes them to fulfil the obligations, that result from the various relations, in which they respectively stand. It is the vigorous root, which supports and nourishes all those virtues, that constitute the dignity of human nature, and the strength and glory of a state.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has not prescribed any particular form of civil government to be adopted by the nations of the world. And it is conceived that one very good reason may be given why it has not, which is, that the kind of government the most suitable for one, might be the most improper for another. But as it forbids all injustice and oppression, as it inculcates every personal, social, and divine virtue, and teaches us to respect the rights of others, as well as to stand fast in our own liberty, it has certainly a friendly aspect on the cause of freedom and of free governments. The nature of the religion of Christ, therefore, and its tendency to promote the happiness of society, and to make us meet for a heavenly inheritance, give it a just claim to our most cordial affection. And a recommendation of it by the example of our civil fathers will justly entitle them to double honor.

Justice is a virtue enjoined by every government, human and divine: And, being reputable in all countries and in all ages, every man would be thought

thought to practise it, yet to enforce the practise of it, and to prevent injustice, may be considered as the chief end of government. It cannot confer rewards on all its quiet and obedient subjects. Its business is to protect them against the violence and injustice of others, that they may enjoy the fruits of their industry in security and peace. This being the end for which civil government was instituted, it is of vast importance that those, who administer it, should act in strict conformity to the rules of justice, both in their public and their private capacities. With how much dignity does a ruler appear, when he can say with Job, "I put on righteousness, and it cloathed me: My judgment was as a robe and a diadem!" His character commands respect, overawes the wicked, and makes him a terror to evil doers. It adds authority to his office, and enables him to answer the end of his elevation much more effectually, than if he were of a different character. Even good men may sometimes find it difficult to pay due honor and respect to an office, when they must despise him who holds it.

A scrupulous adherence to the principles of justice is necessary to procure for a government that respect and confidence, without which it cannot in the best manner effect the design of its institution. When a government defrauds individuals, it may be naturally expected that they will retaliate when they have opportunity: And they will do it with the less compunction or remorse, because it may seem the only practicable mode of obtaining redress. The government in this way contributes to the corrup-

tion of the public morals, and strengthens a pernicious opinion entertained by too many, that there is a real opposition between the interest of the government and that of the people. Injustice on the part of government deprives it of its best support, the confidence of good men. It provokes a spirit of hostility, which is followed by a series of oppressions and frauds, producing and reproducing each other, that too plainly indicate a disease in the body politic, which must terminate in convulsion or dissolution.

THE constitution of this Commonwealth declares that "industry, temperance and frugality, are absolutely necessary to preserve the advantages of liberty, and to maintain a free government." The same doctrine is maintained by the most judicious historians, philosophers and politicians. Patriotism enjoins it therefore as a duty upon all men in public stations to make these virtues reputable by their example, and to resist the progress of the opposite vices, luxury, extravagance and an inordinate love of pleasure, which, as one justly observes, "enervate the soul, make fools of the wise, and cowards of the brave."

THE rapid increase of wealth in our country for a number of years is a subject of congratulation among the friends of our prosperity; but at the same time it has excited some painful apprehensions. Its usual concomitant luxury has kept pace with it.

Is there no reason to fear that our habits of patient industry and economy will be impaired, and that we shall feel little disposition to return to them, when they shall become as necessary, as they have been

been in any former period? It cannot be expected that our career of prosperity will be perpetual. It may meet a severe and sudden check. In any case the demands of luxury increase more rapidly than the means of satisfying them. She is one of the daughters of the horse-leech, which says not, It is enough. Luxury and extravagance have a certain and direct tendency to subject individuals to embarrassments, which are a dangerous snare to integrity, and a fruitful source of discontent and faction in the State. They have a tendency also to produce a speculating, adventurous spirit, which cannot contribute to the general prosperity. It is in the nature of things impossible that every man should make a fortune by games of chance; but it is possible that many by indulging such a spirit may involve themselves and a multitude of innocent persons with them in want and wretchedness.

PATIENT industry and economy are the only certain sources of private and public prosperity, and they are indispensable to the preservation of good morals. They interest men in the support of order, law and government, without which they have no security for the possession and enjoyment of the fruits of their own labors. While the speaker solicits the example of men in public stations to recommend every virtue that leads to political prosperity, he does not presume to instruct them in their official duties. He would however in this connexion beg leave to express a wish that, when money is to be procured for any useful purpose, recourse may

be

be had as seldom as possible to lotteries. They not only operate as a heavy tax upon the poorer class of people; but they beget fantastic hopes and expectations, which cannot be realized, they foster a rage for gaming which tends to the destruction of every virtuous and manly principle, and they undermine the basis of private and public prosperity.

The importance of economy in the public expenditures cannot have escaped the notice of any one. It begets a confidence in the government, it encourages the people to submit to heavy burdens when they are necessary, and it enables the State to meet the extraordinary demands, which providing for the public safety may at any time occasion. It saves the government from much embarrassment in case of war or invasion by means of its credit; and prevents a temptation to have recourse to such expedients as are at once dishonorable and ruinous. It is however a very different thing from parsimony. It shrinks from no burden, which the independence, liberty, safety and honor of the community impose. It does not estimate the value of these things by a pecuniary scale. It does not require men to devote their time and talents to the public service without an adequate compensation. It does not withhold the encouragement that is necessary to the progress of science, and the improvement of useful arts. Parsimony, on the contrary, produces many of the same evils as profusion. It begets no confidence. It regards not the worth of objects, but inquires how much they will cost. It holds out a constant temptation to fraud. It not unfrequently defeats its

its own intentions, and by a solicitude to save trifles incurs the necessity of making large sacrifices.

A generous public spirit is indispensable to the happiness of a free people.

When a mercenary, selfish disposition pervades a community, the love of country becomes a pretence; a regard to the general welfare is professed for the purpose of deception, public employments are sought only as the means of accumulating wealth, and a wide door is open for the practice of corruption, which in process of time may become so general, and be so well understood, that it shall cease to be offensive. When such is the character of a people, their degradation is far advanced, and ruin by rapid strides is hastening on them. It is important therefore that a generous regard to the public welfare be assiduously cultivated. In this, as in every other view, the spirit of Christianity is highly favorable to national respectability. This spirit imbibed by a people disposes them to be just and benevolent, to do to others as they would have others do to them, and to look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. It prevents their entertaining a mean wish that their representatives should so far forget the dignity of their office, as to govern their public conduct by local attachments and interests, or to act the part of mere attorneys for their respective districts, or to do in their public capacity, what a man of probity and honor would blush to do in private.

The same spirit actuating legislators gives a liberal complexion to their conduct. They feel and act as guardians

guardians of the Commonwealth, and invariably aim to do justice to all, and to promote the general welfare. They do not confine their views to the short period of their political existence; but consider the tendency of every public measure to promote the future prosperity of their country.

WERE the Commonwealth a company or partnership to be dissolved with the present legislative body, after which each individual, detached from every other, were to shift for himself, patriotism would not impose such duties on our rulers, as it now does. It would not require them to project or mature plans for the benefit of posterity, nor even of this generation beyond the present year. They might act on the maxim of the epicure, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." Agriculture, commerce, manufactures, public credit, and institutions for the promotion of science, religion and morality, would have no claim to their support or patronage. But as the social compact is not formed for a year or an age, but to be of the same duration with humanity itself, the public-spirited and virtuous guardians of the Commonwealth will consult the interest of unborn generations. In this respect the wisdom, piety, and patriotism of the first planters of New-England can never be too much admired. At a period, when an invincible fortitude was necessary to surmount the difficulties attending a new settlement in a savage wilderness, and when their dangers and hardships might have been thought a sufficient apology for applying all their resources to the purpose of feeding, cloathing,

and defending themselves, they established schools, provided for the religious instruction of the people, and founded a college. Their aim was not merely to people a country: their more noble and sublime object was to make it a seat of piety, virtue and freedom. To their enlightened and patriotic exertions, under God, the present generation is indebted for many of its most precious blessings, and this Commonwealth for the very respectable rank she holds in the union. May their example in this respect be long imitated, and their descendants prove themselves worthy of such ancestors by cherishing their wise institutions, and inquiring, as they did, into the remote, as well as immediate, influence of public measures on the character and happiness of the community. Again,

An attachment to our constitutions of government in opposition to a spirit of innovation, is necessary to the permanency of our political prosperity. Any man, who will take the trouble to reflect, and every man in a public station ought to reflect, becaufe he has to think for others as well as himfelf, will be convinced that innovation and reformation are not synonymous terms.

You will do the speaker the justice to believe that he is not the advocate of unreasonable and groundlefs prejudice; but he frankly confesses that it appears to him lefs dangerous than a blind, impetuous passion for changing. The evils produced by the former are capable of being estimated: the deleterious consequences of the latter bid defiance to calculation. It is justly remarked by a learned

learned British writer, * now in America, that "human nature, with the various interests and connexions of men in a state of society, is so complex a subject, that nothing can be safely concluded a priori with respect to it. It is extremely hazardous, he adds, to introduce any material change into an established form of government. No human sagacity can foresee what inconvenience might arise from it." If these observations are true, and their truth will hardly be controverted by any man of reflection, considerable changes should be the effect of necessity only. Forms of government, and modes of administration, that have been found to answer the end of their institution, should not be hastily changed because some imperfections are discoverable in their theory. When experience has shewn the necessity of alterations, and they can be made without hazard to public peace and order, let them be made. A prudent man will not set fire to his house, and thereby endanger the lives of his family, because some parts are not so perfectly convenient, or some of its proportions not so agreeable to the eye, as they might be made in a new edifice.

EVEN necessary alterations should not be precipitated. It is not sufficient that the necessity be perceived by a few men of superior discernment, skilled in the science of government. Let them wait till the conviction becomes general: and a general conviction must be the effect of feeling, rather than the result of reasoning. If, previous to this, any material alteration be attempted, though it

* Dr. Priestley. See his lectures on history, lect. 1.

it should be with good intentions, the example will have most of the bad consequences of innovation. It will tend to loosen the bands of society, excite a political tempest, and give opportunity to some unprincipled, ambitious, and as yet unknown adventurer to mount the storm, and direct its vengeance against our wisest and best men, whose very wisdom and goodness will in his view be crimes, which nothing but their blood can expiate. Our honored fathers will join with all good men in earnest prayers to the supreme Arbiter of nations; that the day may be far distant, when so sad a catastrophe shall be realized, when the people, after being made the instruments of their own degradation, shall pass from the hands of one master to those of another, with as little ceremony, as if they were beasts of burden. And we feel a confidence that the legislature of Massachusetts will set an example of attachment to her own and the federal constitutions worthy of the imitation of other legislatures, as well as her own citizens. Lastly, a cheerful submission to the laws is indispensable to our political happiness.

In a government like ours the rulers can make no law that does not affect themselves equally with their constituents. This affords a high degree of security that all our laws will be dictated by a regard to the general good, and that no restraint will be laid upon individuals, which does not conduce in a greater degree to the public happiness. Interest therefore as well as duty enjoins a prompt obedience.

But as there are many, and perhaps always will be, in a large community, who do not perceive that

they gain more by the restraints laid on others, than they lose by those laid on themselves, it is of great importance that rulers set an example of cheerful obedience to the laws. If they do not, they will be suspected of having had improper views in enacting them: And the laws will be hated or despised. It is justly required of the ministers of religion that they teach by example: It is not less necessary in a free State that rulers should govern in the same way.

THEIR personal examples and influence may do more than their statutes to discountenance impiety and vice, to promote a religious observance of the Christian Sabbath, to check the progress of infidelity and licentiousness, and to make us a virtuous and a happy people.

ADDRESSES of congratulation to the first and second Magistrates in the Commonwealth have been usual on this anniversary. But it has pleased the all-wise GOD, whose counsels and ways are incomprehensible by us, to remove both of them by death in the last political year.

SOON after its commencement we were called to mourn the loss of our amiable and worthy Governor SUMNER,* whose spirit of government, happily tempered with moderation, and guided by wisdom and integrity, eminently qualified him for the exalted station, to which for several successive years he was invited by the general suffrages of his fellow-citizens. We had indulged the pleasing hope of long tranquility under his government; but his death

* He died June 7, 1799.

death afforded an affecting illustration of the propriety of that scriptural admonition, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

By a recent stroke his Honor Lieutenant-Governor GILL is also numbered with the dead,* after having discharged for nearly a year the duties of the first Magistrate with zeal and fidelity, and after having received the approbation of his constituents, expressed by their almost unanimous re-election of him to fill the station, which he had holden for a number of years.

It would have been peculiarly pleasing to see the people of this large and respectable Commonwealth happily united in the choice of a first Magistrate to succeed his late Excellency Governor Sumner. But in a free elective government it cannot be thought strange that the eyes of the people should be turned towards different persons to fill so important an office. We indulge however the expectation that there will be a general and cordial acquiescence in the will of the majority; as we doubt not a great part of the majority have full confidence, that the Character,† to whom the prevailing suffrages have been given, will ably and faithfully discharge the duties of his office.

Honored Fathers of the Council, Senate, and House of Representatives,

Many of you have had repeated assurances of the confidence of your fellow-citizens, who believe that

* He died May 20, 1800. † His Excellency Caleb Strong, Esq.

that you love your country, and that you will labor to promote its prosperity.

THEY have a right to expect that you will aim in all your acts and deliberations at the public welfare, and particularly that you will exert the powers, with which you are constitutionally vested, to preserve the union of the States, and to support the general government, which is indispensable to our liberty and happiness. We are happy in the confidence that these just and reasonable expectations of your constituents will not be disappointed.

YOU have many motives to fidelity; but none that ought so deeply to impress your minds as this, that you are accountable for all your conduct to the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who standeth in the congregation of the mighty, and judgeth among the gods. Your public and private conduct now will have an important influence on your future state. You will consider therefore, that, though you are rulers over men, you are GOD'S servants, and his approbation is of more importance than all other interests.

THOUGH ye are all called gods on earth, ye shall die like men.

WHAT painful demonstrations of this solemn truth have we had in the past year! Alas! WASHINGTON, whom we loved, and delighted to honor, is no more. The father of his country sleeps in dust. How long shall our tears continue to flow at the recollection of his dear name! But it is for ourselves, not for him we are to weep. Having finished the work, which his Master in heaven had assigned

signed him, he has been called from the field of his labors to receive, as we trust, his reward, and to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy LORD."

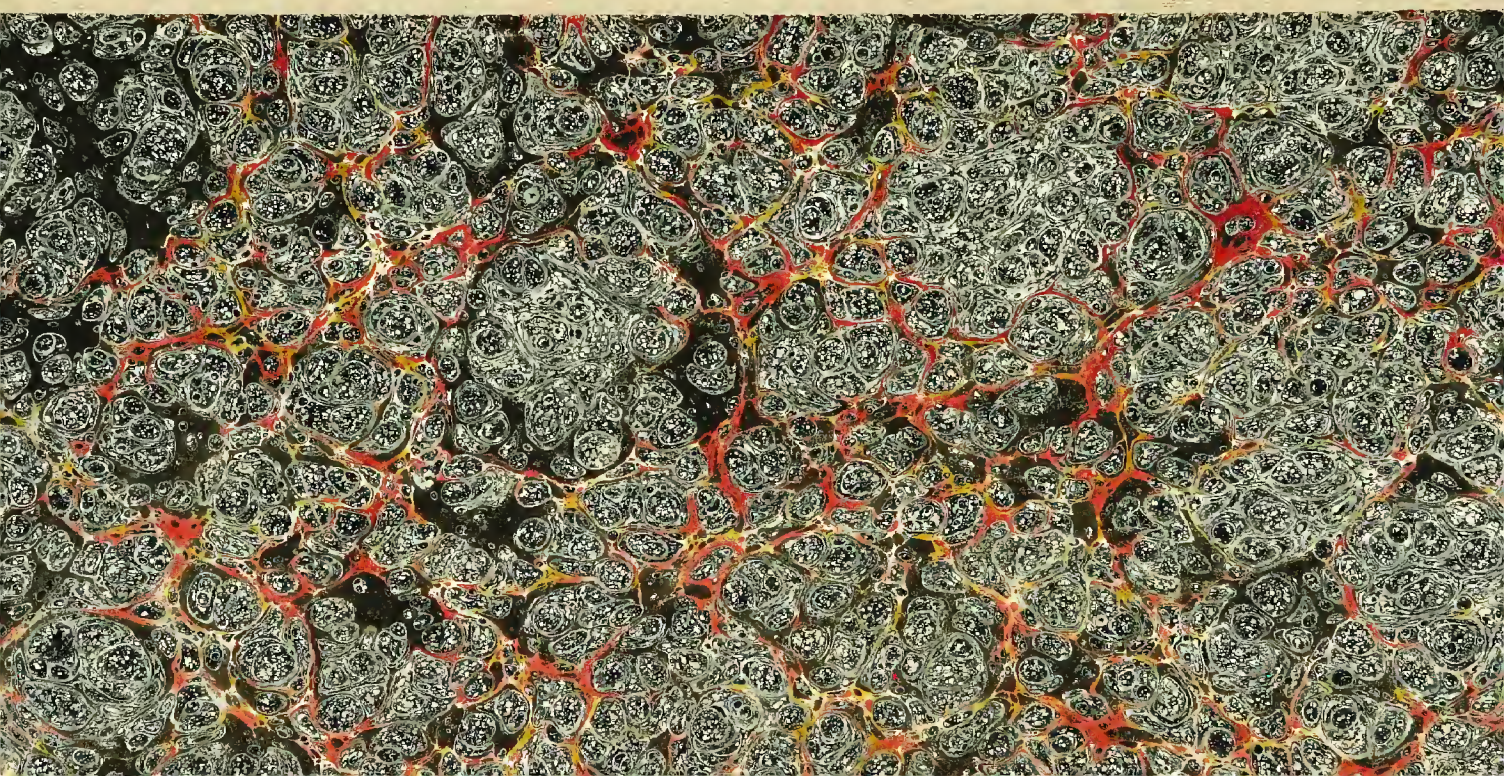
THOUGH removed from our world, his virtues live in our remembrance. And may the affection we had for him in his life, and the sorrow we felt at his death, engage us to honor his memory by an imitation of his pious and virtuous example! By this may he long continue to bless his country!

IMAGINE, honored fathers, that ye hear him, though dead, yet speaking to you. And is not his language to this effect? "Remember that you are not elevated to your present places for your personal emolument, but for the good of your fellow mortals, whose happiness in life depends much on your conduct.

"REJOICE in the honor conferred on you by your fellow-citizens, chiefly because you are thereby enabled to be more useful to them during the short period of your continuance on earth. Bear in mind that however eminent your talents and usefulness, or however great the affection of your country may be, you must soon fall by the hand of death, and your heads be laid low in the dust. Seek therefore the honor that cometh from GOD. Let his fear rule in your hearts; embrace and obey the gospel of his Son, fulfil the duties of your respective stations with fidelity, and then you will be prepared to resign your earthly honors without regret, and enter into possession of glory and immortality."

Fellow-citizens

Fellow-citizens of this assembly,

If, as has been said, the real freedom of a people depends very much on their character and habits, every member of the community by setting a good example may contribute to the preservation of our liberty and happiness. Every man, who lives under the influence of Christian principles, who leads a sober, righteous and godly life, is a benefactor to his country, and he shall not lose his reward. When all terrestrial kingdoms and states shall be dissolved, and the fashion of this world shall pass away, he shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD his GOD, and shall shine as the firmament, and as a star forever and ever.

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